Barn removed for new high school

The 81-year-old barn that sat on the future site of the new Camas High School is gone now, but it will live on, in a somewhat different form.

In May, the district awarded the bid on the barn to Kevin McKercher, of McKercher Custom Wood Works, who partnered with Jonas Shannon, an independent contractor.

The two began working on Memorial Day weekend to remove the barn, helped by a work party of local supporters arranged by their spouses, Doreen McKercher and Amy Shannon.

The barn, much of which was built with old-growth fir trees, was completed in 1919 by the Buttler family, ancestors of Rene Carroll, who has authored a book on the history of her family and the barn.

McKercher and Shannon said that, because of its historical significance, they hope to honor the barn by creating custom furniture and specialty items using the precious wood.

"We teamed up together to tear the barn down because we share a love of wood and a deep respect for our natural resources," said McKercher. "Having the opportunity to reclaim salvageable lumber and preserve a piece of Camas history makes this project even more memorable," he added.

McKercher owns his own custom woodworking and furniture business and has worked with wood since he was six years old. Both McKercher and Shannon are Camas residents and say they plan to make something from the old wood for everyone who helped take the barn down.

For Carroll, they plan to create an heirloom from the wood. In addition, McKercher will build a piece of furniture from the wood to be donated to the Camas Educational Foundation's fall auction.

The scheduled completion date of the new Camas High School is fall 2003.